



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes January 15, 2019 Room 309, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT

Attendees: Ramin Ganeshram, Judy Hamer, Zoe Tarrant, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Maggie Mudd, Dolores Paoli, Catherine Lewis, Harold Bailey, Jr. (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, Alison Patton, and Susan Ellis

Guests: Superintendent Colleen Palmer (Westport Schools), Julie Heller (Westport Schools), Michael Barker (Westport Playhouse), Lauren Francese (Westport Schools), Rebecca Marsick (Staples High School), Chief Foti Koskinas (Westport Police), Lieutenant Dave Wolf (Westport Police), Captain Dave Farrell (Westport Police), Josiah Tarrant (college student)

The meeting was called to order at 8:04AM.

Harold welcomed everyone to the first meeting after the holiday season.

Josiah Tarrant is visiting us today (our 2017 essay contest 2nd-place winner). He is a current college freshman who is working on campus to line up educational programming and speakers through the Care Center (the diversity and inclusion center on his campus).

Approval of Minutes: Catherine Onyemelukwe moved that we approve the minutes from our December 4, 2018 meeting. Ramin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The minutes will be posted accordingly.

Programming:

1. Westport Schools – Superintendent Colleen Palmer joined us. The mold situation at Coleytown Middle School is a challenge currently as we all realize. Dr. Palmer dialoged with the committee about plans for the school system with regards to programming for students, teachers, and parents. TEAM Westport will frame recommendations and get them to her in a later meeting.
2. Essay Contest: Susan reported that this year we are announcing the topic later than before – on January 28th when the press release will go out through the Library and the town. The posters are ready and in two sizes 8.5 x 11 and 11 x 17. The plan is to have the faculty at Staples distribute them. Also, they can be distributed directly to the students electronically. The essays are due on February 28th. The awards ceremony will be held on Wednesday, April 3 at 6:30pm at Saugatuck Congregational Church. We can also put QR codes on the posters.
3. MLK Planning Committee: The celebration is on target for this Sunday, January 20th at 3PM at the Playhouse featuring James Forman, Jr., author of Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America. We need 8 volunteers to collect donations. Catherine O., a friend of Catherine's, and Dolores volunteered. We also need 4 students from TEAM Staples to help during the Q&A.
4. Anti-Racism Training: This session held here on December 17th, with Professor Ibram Kendi and his colleagues from the Anti-Racism Training Center at American University, appears to have gone well. The survey responses were good. The content was valuable and very rich. The next step is to cull the feedback from the attendees of this session and to determine how to modify the training for the next session. It was great to see many town organizations come together on a topic that matters to all of us. We need to sustain this group to be accountable and serve as resources to one another.
 - Professor Kendi is speaking at the Quick Center on January 30th at 8PM. We'll inquire to see if we can provide feedback in person to him when he is here in the area.
 - He recently wrote an article for the *Atlantic Monthly* about his battle with cancer.



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5. TW Book Club: There was a good discussion of Becoming by Michelle Obama at the last session. The next book will be White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo on March 4 at 7PM at the Westport Historical Society.
6. Library Partnership/Coming Events: The restoration of the Library is coming along well and is anticipated to be a superb facility when it's finished. We can brainstorm as to how we can use the space for programming. Our February 5th meeting will be held at 7:30AM in the program room at the library. WestportREADS is still in progress. (Exit West by Mohsin Hamid is the book being read and discussed.)
7. Policing: Chief Koskinas stated that he and members of the force are continuing to work with the Town and associated organizations in sync with TEAM Westport's mission.
8. Westport Historical Society: Tickets to the "Remembered" exhibit will be given to every attendee at the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at the Playhouse this Sunday. As a result of a grant from CT Humanities, an exhibit will open on January 23rd at 6PM on Migration and Immigration. This will be in conjunction with WestportREADS.
9. Playhouse: *The Moth*, presented by NPR, is sold out on January 25th. *In the Heights* is being worked on now and starts right after Easter. Planning for programming is underway for the 2019 season.
10. Interfaith Clergy/Interfaith Council: In conjunction with WestportREADS, the exhibit *Art Across Borders* will open this Friday, January 18th at a reception from 5:30-8:30 at the Saugatuck Congregational Church (Hoskins Hall). It will be up for two months. Renee Soto curated the exhibit. At the opening, her hand painted clothing will be featured in a fashion show.
 - In keeping with WestportREADS, on February 7th at 7PM at the Westport Women's Club, a presentation will be given by an immigrant from Syria who is here in Westport now. TEAM Westport is co-sponsoring this event with the Library and the Interfaith Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40AM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 5th @ 7:30AM at the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine E. McLeod
Secretary